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CIA's Campus Caper

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WITH the apparent approval of successive Administrations the Central Intelligence Agency for 14 years clandestinely subsidized the nation's largest student organization.

The State Department admits it, after disclosure by Eugene Groves, president of the National Student Ass'n. and with an article due to appear soon in Ramparts magazine.

Both State and Mr. Groves contended the subsidy — possibly as much as $3 million — was the only practicable means of financing trips of NSA representatives to student Congresses abroad to "offer alternatives" to the line peddled by communist-financed-and-controlled delegations.

The subsidies began during "cold-war" tensions of the early 1950s. Mr. Groves said changing conditions and a belief among NSA's present officers that the CIA tie-up was "inconsistent with the democratic, open nature of the NSA" caused the student organization to break it last year.

Instead the NSA, he said, will seek "private and open Government financing" — which would have been a good idea in the first place.

Other things which need to be said about this now fortunately defunct arrangement:

- The CIA was not set up as a charitable or educational foundation. It's in the spy business.
- If the presence of U.S. students at such congresses was so vital to the national interest and private funds weren't forthcoming, other Federal agencies would have been more suitable sponsors.

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